

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

June 30, 1972

JCS REVIEWED 29-Nov-2010: DECLASSIFIED FOR RELEASE IN FULL

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: The FALCON LADY

On Dr. Kissinger's instructions I called Mrs. Shih in New York today at 4:45 p.m. to inform her concerning the FALCON LADY incident. I told her that we wanted them to know that a large U.S. commercial ship, the FALCON LADY, accidentally ran aground yesterday near Triton Island at the southernmost end of the Paracel Islands. There were two tug boats now trying to pull her off the reef, and another tug boat was on the way. As soon as the ship was pulled free, all the vessels would leave the area.

She thanked me for this information and said that she would inform the Ambassador.

Winston Lord

cc: Mr. Kennedy

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY



# N M C C

## THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

30 June 1972

0437 EDT

THE JOINT STAFF

### MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Subject: FALCON LADY Incident

1. On 29 June the US merchant ship FALCON LADY, under US registry and Military Sealift Command charter, ran aground on Triton Island, the southernmost island in the Paracel Group, located 170 nautical miles east-southeast of Da Nang. The FALCON LADY requested assistance and reported in danger of breaking up. Under CINCPACFLT authority, two USN salvage tugs and one auxiliary tug have been dispatched to provide assistance. Estimated time of rendezvous is 300920 EDT June.

2. The FALCON LADY is a 19,500-ton tanker, 672 feet in length. On board are 37,000 barrels of aviation gasoline and 68,000 barrels of jet fuel. The ship was en route from Da Nang to Subic Bay.

3. Triton Island is believed to be uninhabited and over the years has been claimed by North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC); however, PRC appears to be showing no interest in the island. The island measures approximately 1/2 mile in length and 10 feet high, having a reef not more than 6 feet deep. It has been used on occasion as a stopover point for South Vietnamese fishermen. Weather in the area is reported good, with overcast, little wind, and calm seas.

*Harold F. Knowles*  
 HAROLD F. KNOWLES  
 Brigadier General, USAF  
 Deputy Director for  
 Operations (NMCC)

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 SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
 AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO  
 YEAR INTERVALS  
 DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER 31 1978  
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